



Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area

*A Collaboration Process
for
Resource Management Planning*

**Bruneau
Planning
Area**



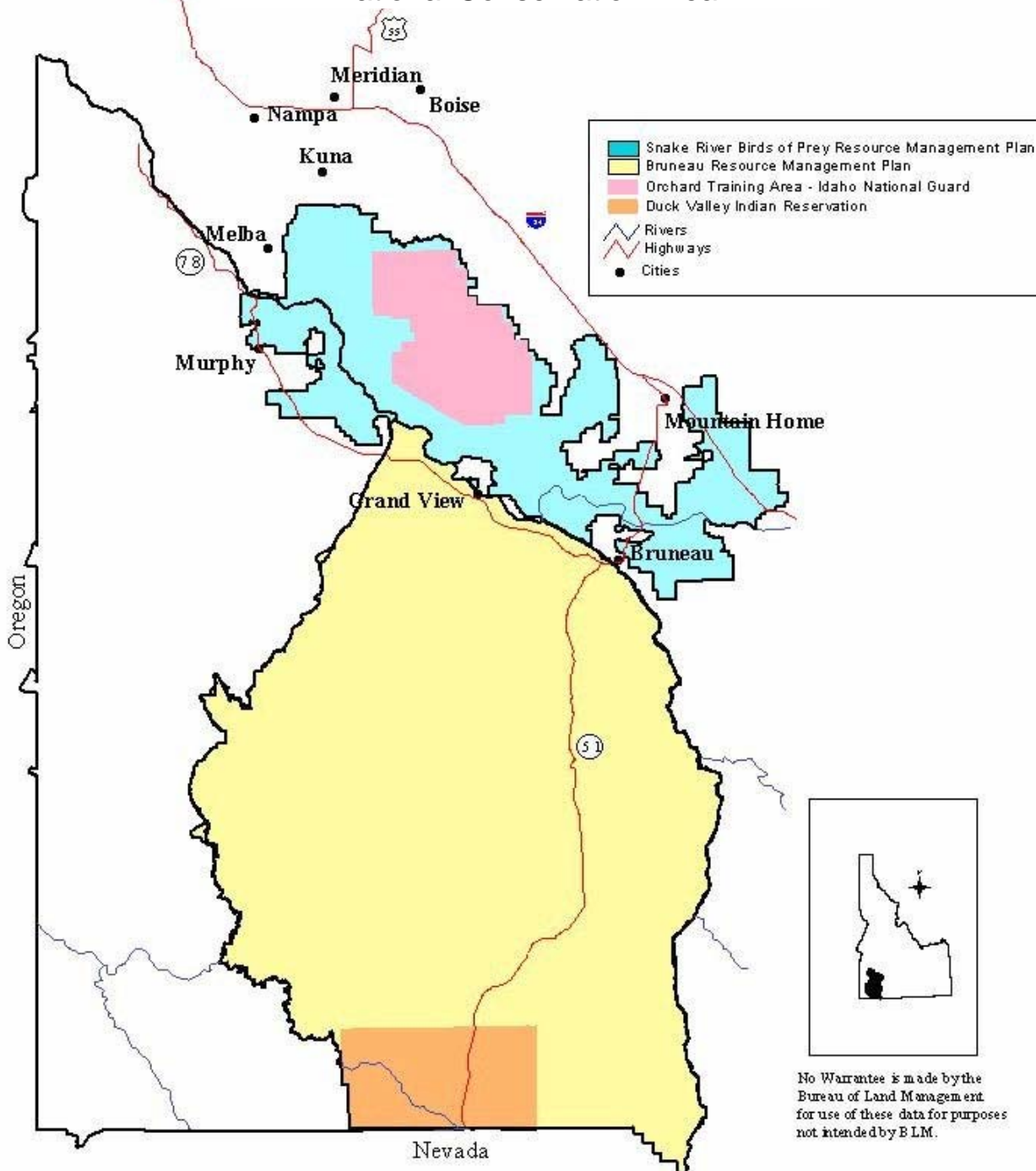
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Bureau of Land Management Lower Snake River District

Bruneau Planning Area and
Snake River Birds of Prey
National Conservation Area



**BRUNEAU PLANNING AREA
SNAKE RIVER BIRDS OF PREY NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS**

COLLABORATION PROCESS PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

I-A. Purpose

The purpose of this Collaboration Process Plan (Plan) is to outline the collaboration process goals, objectives and activities for the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Resource Management Plans (RMP) for the Bruneau Planning Area (Bruneau) and Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (BOP). It describes a unique approach—one that goes far beyond standard public involvement requirements.

The approach is diligent about providing opportunities and processes to foster meaningful public involvement in a way that best meets individual stakeholder needs and results in decision-making that reflects a greater base of public understanding, support and ownership.

This Plan is iterative in nature—it is based on principles of sound public involvement practices, customized to meet stakeholder needs and interests as reflected through the project-specific situation assessment, and flexible so that it can continue to meet stakeholder needs and interests as best as possible as the process—and stakeholder involvement in that process—evolves.

This version of the public collaboration plan was written midway through the public collaboration process—bringing together the goals, objectives, assumptions and implementation activities designed earlier in the process and those designed to meet and enhance stakeholder needs as they evolved later. The intent is to reflect the approach in its entirety and to highlight how goals and objectives influence activities, approaches and flexibility in implementation.

I-B. Background

The BLM is required to involve the public and other stakeholders in its RMP process. Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), this would, at a minimum, require BLM to provide the public an opportunity to comment on BLM's proposal(s) during scoping and provide an opportunity for review and comment when BLM's draft environmental impact statements for the two RMPs are released.

For these RMPs, however, the Lower Snake River District (LSRD) opted to do much more. The LSRD planning team is committed to a meaningful public involvement process, and has designed a collaborative approach preparing both RMPs in a manner consistent with stakeholder interest. The BLM seeks to provide opportunities for land

and resource stewards, including federal, state, county, city, and Tribal governments and the public to help prepare, review, comment on and revise various planning documents throughout the process.

To ensure effective implementation of the process, the LSRD contracted with the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (Institute) to help design and facilitate the collaboration process. The Institute contracted with two local facilitators and public involvement professionals (Susan Hayman, President, North Country Resources, Inc., and Marsha Bracke, President, Bracke & Associates, Inc.) to provide process facilitation. In addition, CDR Associates, a conflict management organization located in Boulder, CO, was contracted to conduct a Situation Assessment early in the process.

I-C. Resource Management Plan Decisions

An RMP is the BLM's basic document for guiding future land use decisions and specific management actions on public lands looking ahead 20 years or more. RMP-level decisions establish goals and objectives for resource management, the measures needed to achieve these goals and objectives, and parameters for using BLM lands. RMPs identify lands that are open or available for certain uses, including any restrictions, and lands that are closed to certain uses. RMP decisions are made on a broad scale and guide subsequent site-specific implementation decisions.

The BLM wants to ensure stakeholders are involved throughout the RMP process in the development and revision of draft products; however, final decisions about the RMP and the RMP process are the BLM's responsibility.

II. FOUNDATION OF THE COLLABORATION PROCESS

II-A. Goals, Objectives, and Assumptions

The following goals and objectives are the basis on which this collaboration process has been developed, and on which process decisions are made.

Goal

To make better decisions with a greater base of public understanding, support and ownership.

Objectives

1. To learn as much as possible from stakeholders to improve BLM decisions. Use stakeholders to help create a good information base.
2. To understand the agency's roles and responsibilities, and what is and isn't negotiable (laws, regulations, requirements, previous decisions, etc.)
3. To engage stakeholders in product development (e.g., issue identification, issue bundling, alternatives development, review of draft EIS.)
4. To provide a variety of involvement opportunities that enable stakeholders to engage at the level that best suits their level of interest.
5. To provide the public an accounting of how their input is used.
6. To seek as much consensus and common ground as possible.

Inherent to implementing the above goals and objectives are some assumptions about process implementation.

Assumptions

1. The proposed collaboration process is based on the Situation Assessment recommendations.¹
2. The process may be modified/enhanced based on expressed public interest and needs during process implementation.
3. BLM and facilitators must be mindful of the need for balanced representation of interests.

¹ See section entitled "Situation Assessment" for more information.

II-B. Situation Assessment

A fundamental component of this collaborative approach is the Situation Assessment (Assessment), which was conducted by CDR. It was CDR's task to conduct personal interviews with a variety of stakeholders and produce an objective report to assist the BLM in:

1. Identifying and analyzing resource management issues for the RMPs, and
2. Developing and carrying out appropriate processes to involve the public throughout the RMP process.

The report was specifically intended to “augment other RMP scoping activities through the use of confidential interviews with key stakeholders who collectively represent the full range of perspectives on RMP issues.” The complete report is available on the BLM website (www.ecr.gov/pdf/blm_report_final.pdf).

Summarily, the Assessment recommended seven key principles for public involvement in making specific process design choices. These were:

- ∄ Realistically match internal resources to commitments
- ∄ Identify what is fixed and what is open for input and influence by the public
- ∄ Be clear and consistent
- ∄ Educate about the RMP process and how it links to future site-specific decisions
- ∄ Link to national strategies and policies (and court precedents) in order to focus on what is open for discussion and minimize debate on issues that are already decided
- ∄ Follow through on commitments, both procedural and substantive, and
- ∄ Be publicly accountable for seeking in put from the public.

In late 2001 and early 2002, during the initial stages of the project and prior to the release of the Assessment, the project facilitators facilitated six public scoping meetings, and drafted goals and objectives for the collaboration process (Page 3). In addition, LSRD initiated an RMP newsletter and published informational documents about the RMP on its web site. An Intergovernmental Coordination Group (ICG) was also formed during this time to improve communication and coordination with government entities at all levels around the RMP processes. These activities—and the rationale behind the activities and their processes—were measured against the results of the Assessment once it was complete. All were found to be consistent with Assessment findings.

One significant Assessment finding was that stakeholders were generally not interested in trying to reach a consensus on results (due to trust and time issues). It reflected that a RMP process designed to achieve stakeholder consensus was unrealistic and consequently one in which stakeholders were not willing to participate. There may be opportunities in some areas to reach some consensus among some stakeholders—and factoring that opportunity into the process may add some value. But given this study, the collaboration process outlined within this plan recognizes that consensus is not a goal.

However, maintaining a process that is as open and accessible as possible to stakeholders is an important driver of this approach.

An informal process for following up to get feedback on the collaboration process to date was conducted. The results of that process are summarized in the “reflections” section below.

II-C. Promise to the Public and Other Stakeholders

The BLM is asking the public and other stakeholders to work with them—and with each other—to provide recommendations and develop products that will result in two new RMPs. Throughout this collaboration process, the BLM is looking for areas of substantial agreement (not necessarily consensus) on recommendations and products. Some of the recommendations will deal with planning area-wide issues; others will be specific to localized areas.

The final RMPs are unlikely to completely meet everyone’s interests. However, identification of areas of substantial agreement will result in a better decision for all. *The BLM will honor and carry forward those recommendations and products reached through consensus or based on substantial agreement that conform to existing laws, policies, regulations, and BLM’s mission.*

II-D. Special Relationships

The BLM acknowledges several relationships that have unique and special involvement opportunities in this process as required by federal law and inter-governmental agreements. These include:

Cooperating Agencies

By formal agreement with BLM, the Idaho Army National Guard and Owyhee County have been designated as cooperating agencies in the RMP process. As cooperators, the National Guard and the County participate on the BLM’s Interdisciplinary (ID) Team (the BLM’s internal scientific and technical resource personnel) as it works on the details of the RMP. Cooperators are expected to function in a manner and schedule consistent with the ID team and support and attend stakeholder meetings respective to the RMP. All federal, state and local governments with an interest in the RMP were and are invited to join the BLM as a cooperating agency should they be interested in doing so.

Wings & Roots

Native American Tribes maintain a Nation-to-Nation relationship with the federal government. In this instance, the Tribes have expressed their desire to participate in the RMP process through an existing forum called Wings & Roots—a regularly scheduled meeting between the Tribes and their federal counterparts. BLM honors this relationship through its participation in the forum and brings RMP information and products to the Tribes in this context. The Tribes are also invited to participate in the RMP's Intergovernmental Coordination Group for information sharing and coordination should they be interested in doing so, and a Tribal representative participates on the BLM's Resource Advisory Council (RAC).

Intergovernmental Coordination Group

Representatives from federal, state, county, city and Tribal governments are invited to participate in the RMP's Intergovernmental Coordination Group (ICG). The ICG is convened expressly for the purpose of providing consistency review of draft products, and provides input as appropriate pertaining to those reviews. To meet the objective of being consistent in the relationship with the public, the ICG reviews all major products prior to public release.

Resource Advisory Council

The RAC is the BLM's citizen-based Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)-chartered advisory group tasked to study and bring consensus-based advice to the BLM on issues of its choosing or of BLM's request. The RAC consists of individuals representing a range of perspectives. The RAC has convened an RMP subcommittee to work closely with the BLM on RMP development and to support the BLM in its public outreach activities.

II-E. Stakeholders

In addition to the federal, state, county, city, and Tribal governments and RAC stakeholders as outlined above, numerous special interest groups, recreational users, ranchers, residents and public stakeholders are interested and involved in the development of the two RMPs. The LSRD maintains a mailing list of more than 500 stakeholders who receive project communications and who are invited to participate in the various public involvement activities. LSRD personnel are available to meet with any stakeholder or group of stakeholders to discuss RMP-specific issues about which they are interested or concerned.

III. COLLABORATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

III-A. General Process Overview

The process outlined below is designed to achieve the collaborative goals and objectives articulated on Page 3. This process is described for Year 1 and 2 (2002-2003) of this project, and does not include the public process that will occur in Year 3 (review and comment on the draft Environmental Impact Statement, revisions of the alternatives or analysis (if needed), preparation of the final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision).

Process activities are designed to recognize the special relationships between the BLM and its formal stakeholders, and provide for collaborative opportunities to create products instrumental to the development of the RMP.

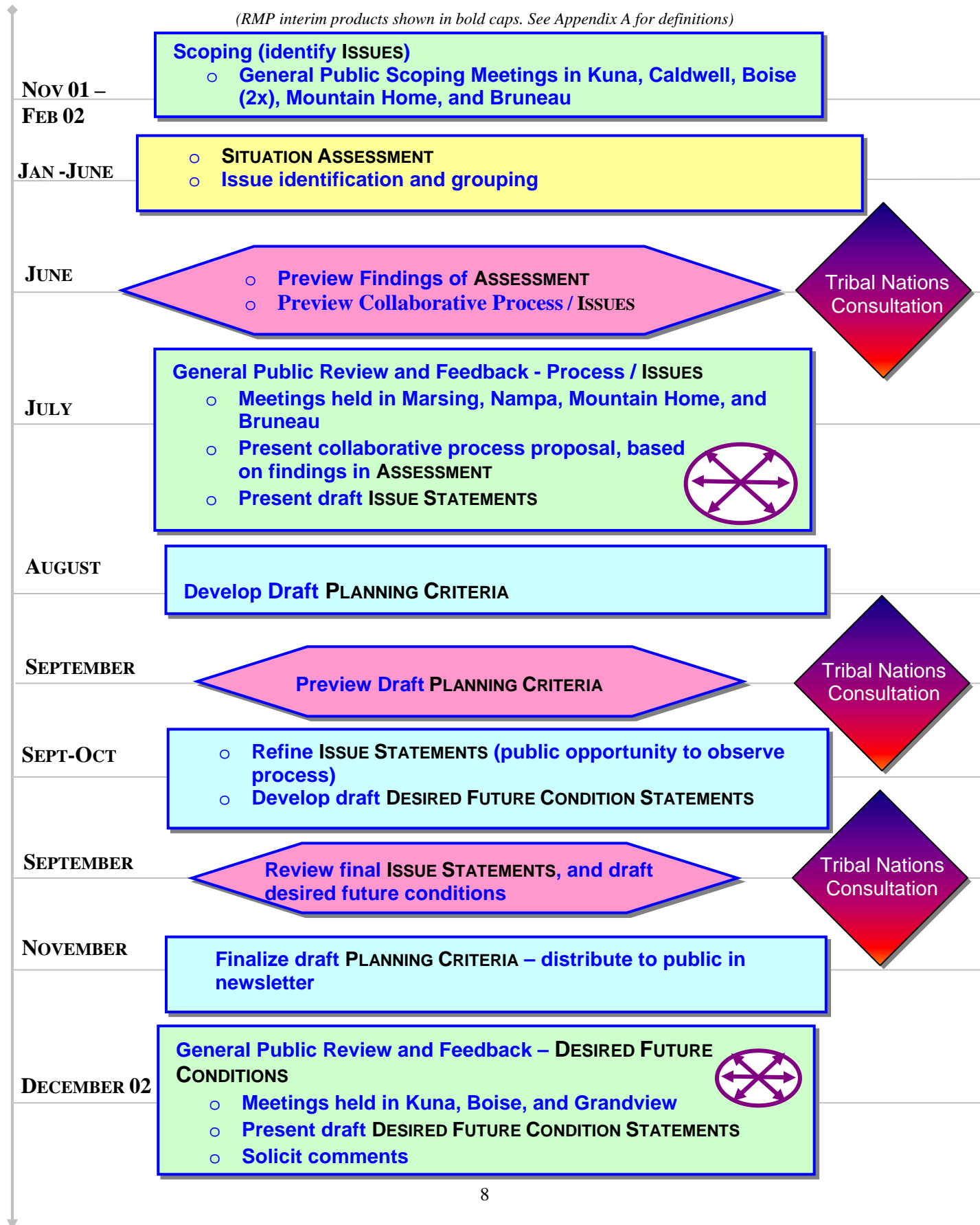
The three following flowcharts graphically depict the collaboration process:

1. The first captures the process implemented during the first year of the planning effort.
2. The second captures the process for year two of the planning effort, and reflects enhancements and additional detail brought to the process based on the lessons learned and successes from year one.
3. The third outlines the process for alternative development. Draft alternatives are anticipated to be the one product in which stakeholders have the most direct interest. This process has been designed so that alternative development is open, involves stakeholders, provides opportunities for input, allows for peer review, and results in a product(s) in which stakeholders have some ownership, understanding and support.

Following the flow charts are more detailed descriptions of the RMP activities displayed in the flow charts. The flow charts depict general processes followed in each step of the RMP development. Attachment A provides a description of each of those interim products that lead to alternative development.

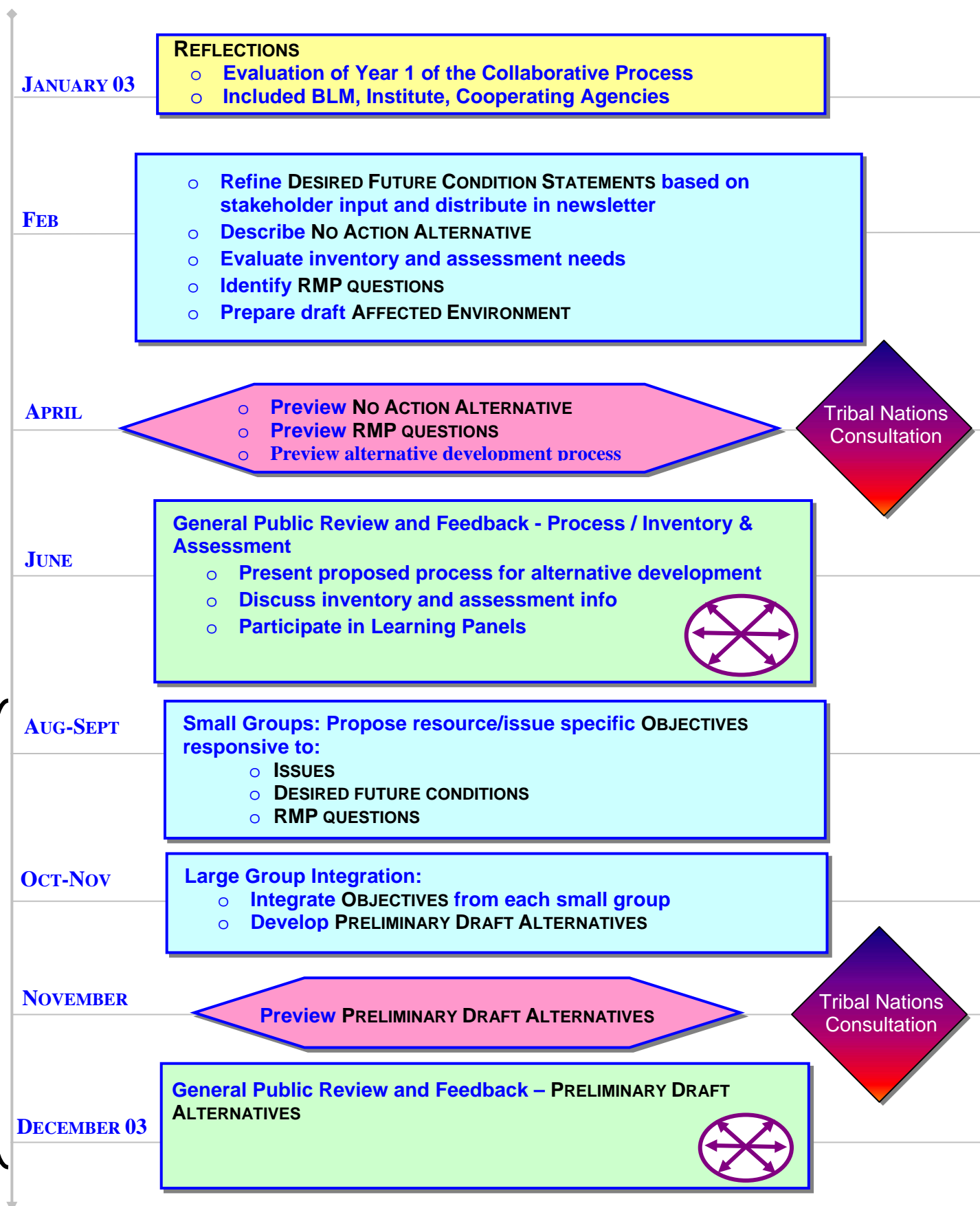
III-B. Collaboration Process – Year 1

(RMP interim products shown in bold caps. See Appendix A for definitions)



III-C. Collaboration Process – Year 2

See Alternative Development Process, Page 13



III-D. Collaboration Process - Description of Activities

Key:



BLM / Institute Contractors Actions

BLM works with the Institute contractors who provide fundamental support and consulting services to the collaborative process. These actions include communication with stakeholders, issuing draft RMP products for stakeholder consideration and input, and designing public meeting processes, and design processes for the consideration and incorporation of stakeholder input on RMP products. Institute contractors' design and facilitate process work and ensure that a neutral professional conducts meetings and provides process expertise on behalf of all stakeholders.



Structured Checkpoints

For each product and phase in the development of the RMP, a number of structured and formal checkpoints are planned with those stakeholders with whom the BLM has special relations. Typically, these checkpoints will occur while materials are in a draft development stage and before materials undergo public review. This provides the BLM, its cooperating agencies, the Tribes, and other government personnel the opportunity to review draft materials for coordination purposes and to review for consistency with government-specific regulations and requirements. This input can be used to refine the materials, enhance coordination, and reduce potential confusion among public stakeholders. These forums include:

Owyhee County Coordination Forum

LSRD Management and Owyhee County Commissioners meet on a monthly basis for information-sharing and coordination purposes. The RMP is a recurring agenda item for these meetings, and specific planning activities and products are presented to that forum on a regular basis. As a Cooperating Agency, Owyhee County provides staff to participate on the BLM's Interdisciplinary Team on product development.

Intergovernmental Coordination Group

The Intergovernmental Coordination Group is open to federal, state, county, city and Tribal representatives with resource and planning responsibilities within and/or adjacent to the planning area. The purpose of the group is to share information and provide consistency review of all draft documents, and to discuss and resolve potential inconsistencies among collective planning efforts. At some junctures, ICG members are invited to participate in a workshop setting when their input on product development is essential. The ICG meets on an ad hoc basis as appropriate to the status of the products under development.

Resource Advisory Council

The BLM's Resource Advisory Council meets on a quarterly basis and is routinely briefed on RMP issues and products. Furthermore, the RAC has assigned a subcommittee to be regularly involved in RMP product development and support RMP public process activities.



Tribal Nations Consultation

The BLM has a unique nation-to-nation relationship with Native American Tribes, and formally consults with the Shoshone-Paiute and Shoshone Bannock tribes on a monthly basis and at specific checkpoints through the Wings and Roots forum.



BLM / RAC-RMP /Cooperating Agencies Coordinated Actions

Representatives from Cooperating Agencies are part of the BLM Interdisciplinary Team and are included in any BLM product-development activity. The RAC is designed to provide the BLM with a readily available resource of a range of public perspective on public issues. Therefore, there are some activities where involvement of the RAC RMP Subcommittee and the Cooperating Agencies are considered essential to product development.

Typically, this involvement is solicited when products are being revised based on public input—to ensure that the revision incorporates the range and perspective of all that was provided. This involvement usually occurs through facilitated workshops where RAC RMP Subcommittee personnel, the BLM's Interdisciplinary Team, and the Cooperating Agencies work through product development in a forum that is open to public observation and comment.



General Public Actions

The BLM solicits stakeholder input in scoping to identify those issues about which stakeholders are concerned, and then through the creation of each interim product to ensure stakeholder perspectives have been addressed. In some instances, interim products are sent out as informational items only.

Typically, public outreach activities take the form of:

- ∄ Public meetings and open houses
- ∄ Workshops where the public is invited to observe and comment
- ∄ Newsletters, mailings of products, and web site where products can be reviewed
- ∄ Written comments
- ∄ Telephone comments
- ∄ Science Learning Panel discussions
- ∄ Peer Review Panel discussion

III-E. Collaboration Process – Alternative Development

Draft alternatives may be the products of most significant interest to BLM stakeholders. While other products (such as issue statements and desired future conditions) may shape draft alternatives, it is the draft alternatives, themselves, that will set the range of options for future land management decisions. Therefore, specific objectives and processes are reflected in this plan to describe the draft alternative development process.

Small Working Groups:

The following Collaboration Process - Alternative Development flow chart depicts the open and iterative nature of the alternatives development process. The process starts with **small working groups** composed of a subset of the BLM ID Team (with its Cooperators), RAC and ICG representatives. The small groups focus on specific resource/use subjects. Their mission is to identify specific objectives for their resource/use based on the products developed to date: Issue statements, desired future conditions, RMP questions, a description of the No Action Alternative, the affected environment and relevant inventory and assessment data.

Large Working Group:

The specific resource/use objectives are then brought to the **large working group**. The large working group includes the full BLM ID Team (with its Cooperators), RAC and ICG representatives. The products from the small working groups objectives are compared, contrasted, calibrated and integrated into groupings that will eventually produce draft alternatives. During this process, a small working group may need to be reconvened to work on specific issues as requested by the large working group.

All small working groups and large working group sessions will be open to the public to observe, and a public comment period will be available during each meeting.

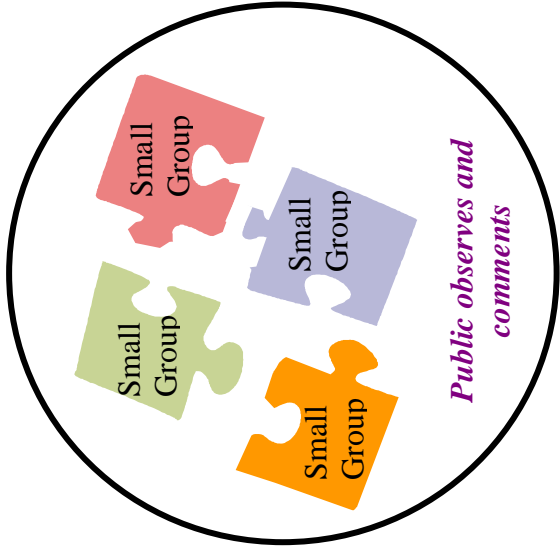
Draft preliminary alternatives developed by the large working group will be reviewed through the structured checkpoints (full RAC, ICG, Tribes). They will then undergo peer review, and the public will be allowed to review and comment on the draft alternatives in a public meeting format. This review process will result in revised draft alternatives that will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.

III-E. COLLABORATION PROCESS: ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT (CONT'D)

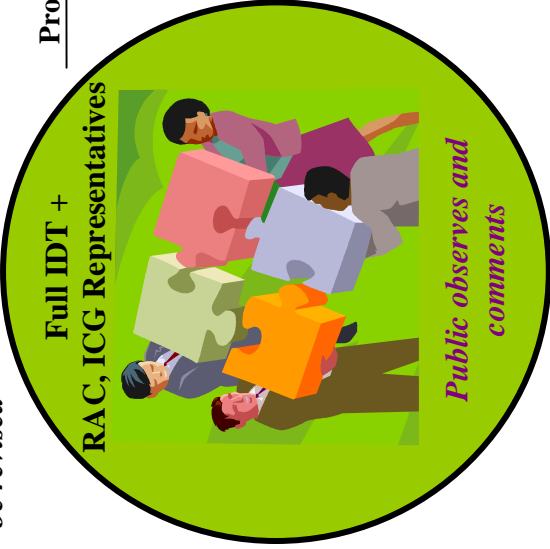
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Using the products¹ developed to this point, **Small Working Groups** (subset of ID Team, RAC and ICG representatives) draft specific resource/use objectives consistent with DFCs

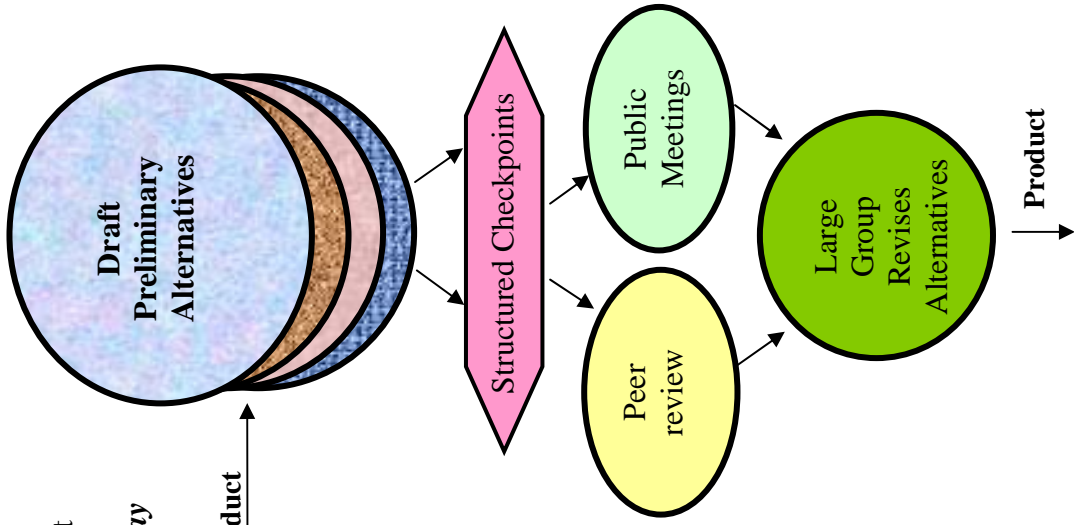
Large Working Group—Integrate products of small working groups to meet collective resource/use objectives that achieve DFCs; *small group objectives may be revised*



Specific
Resource
Objectives
↔
Revise, if
needed



Product



¹ Issues, Desired Future Conditions, Planning Criteria, RMP Questions, No Action Alternative, Affected Environment, Inventory & Assessment Data

IV. COLLABORATION PROCESS MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Collaboration Process includes formal and informal mechanisms for determining its success to-date and making mid-course adjustments to ensure meaningful involvement and sustainable products.

Informal measurements include:

- ∉ Regular planning team meetings to assess schedule and confirm process
- ∉ Written and oral meeting and process evaluations at public meetings
- ∉ Written and oral meeting and process evaluations at facilitated meetings of the ICG, Interdisciplinary Team, and Product Workshops

Formal assessments include reflections meetings. Reflections meetings provide an opportunity for BLM State Office, LSRD management, planning team, cooperators and contractor personnel to collectively review lessons learned to-date and evaluate opportunities for future enhancements in the process. These meetings will be held at least annually. They include an update of the collaboration process, accomplishments to date, a summary of stakeholder comment (from interviews conducted by the facilitators), identification of any mid-course changes, and refinement of the project timeline using the best available information.

V. COLLABORATION PROCESS CONTACT INFORMATION

Bureau of Land Management Lower Snake River District 3948 Development Avenue Boise, ID 83705

Mike O'Donnell, RMP Team Lead
Phone: 208.384.3315
e-mail: mike_o'donnell@blm.gov

Mary Jones, RMP Writer/Editor
Phone: 208.384.3305
e-mail: mary_jones@blm.gov

Jenna Whitlock,
Owyhee Field Office Manager
Phone: 208.384.3330
e-mail: jenna_whitlock@blm.gov

John Sullivan, Snake River Birds of Prey
National Conservation Area Manager
Phone: 208.384.3338
e-mail: john_sullivan@blm.gov

MJ Byrne, Lower Snake River District
Public Affairs Specialist
Phone: 208.384.3393
e-mail: mj_byrne@blm.gov

Cooperating Agency Personnel

Jim Desmond, Owyhee County Representative
Address: PO Box 128, Murphy, ID 83650
Phone: 208.495.2185
e-mail: OCNRC DIR@aol.com

Marj McHenry,
Idaho Army National Guard Representative
Address: 4715 S. Byrd St.
Boise, ID 83705-8905
Phone: 208.422.4180
e-mail: marj.mchenry@id.ngb.army.mil

Resource Advisory Council, RMP Subgroup

Donna Griffin, RAC Vice-Chair
Phone: 208.884.0919
e-mail: d_griffin@direcway.com

Gil Green, RMP Subgroup Chair
Phone: 208.388.2795 (work)
e-mail: gggreen@idahopower.com

Process Facilitators

Susan Hayman: North Country Resources, Inc.
Address: PO Box 6087, Boise, ID 83707
Phone: 208.385.0128
e-mail: north_country@att.net

Marsha Bracke: Bracke & Associates, Inc.
Address: 6750 Southside Blvd.
Nampa, ID 83686
Phone: 208.442.1760
e-mail: BrackeInc@att.net

U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution

Dr. Larry Fisher, Senior Program Manager
Address: 130 South Scott Avenue
Tucson, AZ 85701
Phone: 520.670.5299
e-mail: fisher@ecr.gov

APPENDIX A - PRODUCTS

Issues: Issues are items of concern that were raised by BLM, cooperators, and stakeholders during the scoping process, grouped by like topic.

Issue Statements: Issue statements describe the collection of concern about a specific topic as raised during scoping.

Situation Assessment (Assessment): The document prepared by CDR Associates resulting from a series of stakeholder interviews that identified issues of concern and outlined process options that stakeholders would find most meaningful.

Planning Criteria: The list of regulatory and policy requirements that the BLM must follow and adopt in its planning documents.

Scoping Report: A binder that outlines and depicts all the process, products and communications of scoping.

Desired Future Conditions: Statements describing those resource conditions for which the BLM RMP and stakeholders will work to achieve during the 20-year term of the RMP and around which alternatives will be based.

Reflections: A measurements and evaluation mechanism used by the Institute team to determine the success of the process to-date and calibrate process and communications to best meet stakeholder needs.

RMP Questions: Those questions, generated either by regulatory and policy requirement or inherent in public issue statements, that the RMP must answer. These questions must be responded to in some way in each alternative.

Affected Environment: A description of the existing environment that will be directly affected by BLM actions in the RMP.

No Action Alternative: The alternative describing what would happen on the landscape if the BLM continued to manage the land the same way it does today.

Preliminary Draft Alternatives: The results of an iterative and open process to develop draft alternatives for stakeholder and public review prior to inclusion in the draft environmental impact statement.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement: The formal document issued to stakeholders and public for review and comment prior to decision-making.

Record of Decision: The document formalizing BLM decisions for the RMPs. This document is generally released with the Final Environmental Impact Statement.